

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1-15, 17, 19-22 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 15 have been amended. Claims 16, 18, 23, 24 and 25 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claims 1-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,478,990 (Montanari et al).

Montanari relates to a method of tracking the production history of livestock and meat food products, derived therefrom, using barcodes. (Col. 9, lines 36-50.) Montanari "the present invention utilizes computers to scan labels produced during a production process to input information into a computer database for later retrieval and access." (Col. 6, lines 10-13.)

In contrast, amended claim 1 now recites a tracking method for a supply chain where crop information is inputted at a first stage, processing information is inputted at a second stage, and the information is stored in at least one of a first stage database and a second stage database. Montanari lacks the step of authorizing the defined extent of access to the first stage information via the second stage as recited in amended claims 1 and 8. Nothing in Montanari teaches or suggests the authorization of the defined extent of access (e.g., limited access or full access) to the first stage information via the second stage. For example, the authorization of the defined extent of access may allow the confidential exchange of data among a particular subset of users of the method to facilitate a supply chain transaction. For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 1 and 8. Because claims 2-7 depend upon claim 1, claims 2-7 are patentable for at least similar reasons to claim 1. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the above rejection of claims 1-8.

With respect to claim 9, Montanari defines food products as including grains, such that the production history of grains may be tracked. (Column 19, lines 2-5.) However, Montanari lacks critical details on (a) tracking of any food product derived from the grain and (b) a "non-linear supply chain, defined by multiple distinct outputs derivable from processing the grain ingredient at a corresponding non-linear nodal stage" as claimed in amended claim 9. The distinct outputs may be various derivatives (e.g., corn flour, corn meal and flaking grits) derived from the grain ingredient (e.g., corn). For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the above rejection of claim 9. Because claims 10-15, 17 and 19-22 depend upon claim 9, claims 10-15, 17 and 19-22 are patentable for at least similar reasons to claim 9.

Any amendments to the claims that were not explicitly explained above were made to clarify the claims to advance comprehension of the claims by the Examiner and the public

and not to overcome any cited prior art. Accordingly, the interpretation of such amendments that were not explicitly explained above shall be entitled to broad interpretations under the doctrine of equivalents in accordance with applicable case law.

In conclusion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested. If there are any issues that can be resolved via a telephone call, the Examiner is encouraged to call Applicant's representative.

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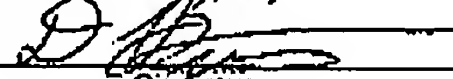
Respectfully,


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